

## **Remarks at Pete Conrad's Funeral**

**by NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin**

The NASA family is in mourning.

As we pay tribute to our accomplishments of 30 years ago, we have lost one of the members of the NASA family who was a key player in the legacy of Apollo.

The man we are here to honor today, Pete Conrad, dedicated himself to achieving the dreams of a pioneering Nation.

Pete Conrad was a man who had his feet planted firmly on the moon, but always kept reaching for the stars.

America first got to know Pete as a member of Gemini and Apollo.

He was one of a select few who had the right stuff to carry out America's dreams and represented the best and bravest.

He combined courage, discipline, intelligence, enthusiasm, and an unstoppable pioneering spirit with a legendary sense of humor.

He had an extraordinary ability to confidently undertake the most difficult journeys—and to have fun along the way.

Pete made it look easy, but all of the NASA team knew it was hard.

Pete commanded the Apollo 12 mission, which while still on the launch pad was struck twice by lightning, but went on to land deftly on the moon. Amid the lunar darkness and utter isolation, Pete still cracked jokes with Alan Bean.

One of his colleagues said that any one of the Apollo astronauts could have been the one to take the historic first step on the moon.

As we all know, Pete's first word as he stepped on the moon was "Whoopee!"

If Pete had been the first astronaut to step on the moon, I like to think that the first word out of his mouth would not have changed.

Throughout his life, Pete used words like "Whoopee" and "Eureka" to express his sheer joy and excitement.

On his Gemini 11 flight, when he was flying higher than anyone had ever flown, Pete looked back at the Earth and said, "Eureka, Houston, the Earth is really round!"

He got a good laugh when he got back to Houston and was flooded with mail from members of the Flat Earth Society telling him he didn't know what he was talking about.

Pete didn't hear the voices of the cynics, he danced with dreamers and brainstormed with believers.

What I loved most about Pete Conrad was that when he left NASA, he continued to direct his energy, his brilliance and his enthusiasm into difficult, cutting-edge work that kept us reaching for the stars.

As you know, I get a little excited when I talk about space, but when I was with Pete, his energy and excitement far eclipsed mine.

He cast his contagious spell on countless others, converting legions of followers.

As head of Universal Space Lines, Pete was looking at entrepreneurial ways to take the next bold steps of space exploration.

This kind of work isn't easy, and isn't always successful, but everyone knows Pete never let setbacks get in his way.

Feet planted firmly on the moon, always reaching for the stars.

He knew the government would help lead the way in opening the space frontier, but he knew it would take private enterprise to really open up low-earth orbit to all.

He wanted everyone to experience what he had experienced.

He wanted all of us to feel the joy, the wonder, the sheer incredibility of space exploration.

He brought businessmen and women, entrepreneurs, and start-up companies to the table. He hired brilliant young people and wise old owls. And he and Nancy produced education products and toys to inspire a new generation of space explorers.

Why, after achieving fame and success, did he continue to work so hard?

Because he cared. He cared about our young people, he cared about America's future.

He dedicated himself to making sure America would have the skills and tools necessary for the 21st Century...for its defense, economic security, scientific inquisitiveness, and sheer inspiration.

He cared so passionately, so deeply, that everyone who knew Pete knew he would never be content to rest on his laurels.

He had to inspire us to greater, loftier goals. To think beyond the moon, to think beyond the space program as we currently know it.

When Pete's vision of regular and routine access to space becomes a reality, you can be assured he'll be along for the ride.

And - as he did throughout his life - he'll make sure we all have fun along the way.

I last saw Pete several months ago in Austin, at a symposium at the LBJ Library, where, as usual, he stole the show with his trademark brand of wit, verve, and vision.

To Nancy and the rest of the Conrad family, thank you for sharing Pete with us. Men like him don't come around very often.

Feet planted firmly on the moon, always reaching for the stars, he was an extraordinary person.

At Alan Shepard's memorial service, I noted that there are certain individuals who shine so brightly that even when they are gone, their star lights the path for others to follow.

Pete's star now joins Alan's and others in that very special constellation.

Pete, we will miss you, but we will continue to follow your star.

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